

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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WATERFOWL NESTING AREAS IN FAIRLY GOOD SHAPE, SURVEY IS INDICATING

An extensive air and ground survey of waterfowl nesting areas in the United States and Canada, underway by the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service, is indicating conditions nearly as good as last year.

Habitat conditions in the Canadian prairies appear to be almost as good as 1970, but Montana, the Dakotas, and western Minnesota are drier than a year ago. Ducks apparently are as abundant as in 1970 in the Canadian pothole region, but below last year's number in the north-central States. Temperatures have been moderate, and no severe storms have been reported--factors that are favorable to duck production.

Also cooperating in the surveys are the Canadian Wildlife Service, State and Provincial agencies, and Ducks Unlimited, Canada

The "prairie pothole" country, which includes the Dakotas, western Minnesota, eastern Montana, and large parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, is often called North America's "duck factory." The potholes are glacier-formed ponds and lakes which, with the right combination of snow and rainfall, are ideal duck nesting sites.

Two surveys are made annually. The May observations are of water levels and other conditions that affect nesting success, and of the number of nesting birds.

The second survey, in July, reveals summer water conditions and the success of the hatch. The surveys provide the basis for fall waterfowl hunting regulations.

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